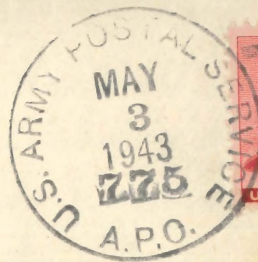


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Air Mail

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Censored by:
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Monday
May 3rd, 1943

Hello Folks.-

Don't know just why I'm writing for to tell the truth - I not only know nothing to write - I don't know what I'm allowed to write either. - It seems that each place we stay at has its own system of what can or cannot be said, - so how are we to know. -?

Well, - we thought we had reached the end of our journey when we landed here - but apparently no, for if the weather even breaks we go on. - And Incidentally - I'm afraid my A.P.O. number might be changed - that's only a guess on my part cause rumour has it that "3779" is only a holding number for ^{our} mail until we reach our real + final destination - when they will forward it to us from there! - Could be - or not but apparently lil' Frankie won't be getting mail for awhile! - Oh well, - it will mean just that much more when it does start to flow!

We are now in North Africa, they tell me - and we surely must be cause the weather is pretty cool. - we wear our

jackets even in doors - and with only cold water with which to shower - well. I haven't heard anyone taking a shower for several days! - Me included!

We had an interesting trip into the native quarter of town the other day - also I guess it might be termed a revolting one. We hired a taxi (horse + carriage) and with a guide who could speak a little English, we set out. - First we did the Sultan's Palace - quite a joint - It must have covered a couple of city blocks, and right in the heart of the native quarter. - There were several big patios with fruit trees growing + all sorts of stuff. One patio had four rooms off of it - one for each of the 4 legitimate wives the law allowed him. - Another was where the rest of the wives (365 of 'em) danced and entertained him of an evening while he was making the selections of the lucky ones for the night! - And then another large room with the Master's bedroom off to one side and a waiting room for the other wives chosen for the evening!! - Then of course there were the harem quarters - guards quarters etc. Very interesting and old. - That's the one thing that's hard to get used to - the age of everything. There is a wall around something that they say is 700 yrs. old!

We had quite a funny experience happen to us while there. - It started raining cats & dogs - so after our tour - (as it was about 4 blocks from where we left the taxi) - we were just standing around waiting for the rain to slacken. - Well, - the French man who had guided us thru the Palace - beckoned to us to follow him. - ~~Well~~ - He did - ending up in his own living quarters. - When we went in the one room - we saw his wife in bed over in a corner - apparently ill - so naturally we started backing out. - But no go - he made us go in & motioned to some chairs for us to sit! - Imagine the situation - He & his wife could speak no English & Buckert & I didn't know the first word of French! - We were just like humps on the log - ready to bolt at the first opportunity, and sitting there with us grinning at them, and them grinning at us! - First he offered us cigarettes - then in a moment "cavi" - but we still shook our heads. - Finally - he ran out of the room returning with a bottle of wine and in spite of all our protestations - filled up large glasses for us. - Well, - at this point - we couldn't refuse - so we drank his wine. - At the first taste (it was pretty potent) Buckert said, "God, what stuff" - and I said - "smile, damn it - make 'em think you like it or it will insult the people!" So --- we sat there smiling and shouting "good" or "bon" or "bien" at them & they at us. - Finally the rain slackened, and we took a hasty departure! - I tried to talk to them in Spanish to ease the situation - but they only understood

enough to know I was trying to talk to em!-

From there we went to the native market place.

Personally - I'd just as soon not go again - you can't imagine people living in such filth & dirt. - It most turned our stomachs. The narrow street just packed with people on the curb with their wares. Dirt galore - deformed people - little kids begging, and everyone so dirty looking that you just know they've never had a bath - and positive of it once you get near them! It actually makes you wonder how people can live & prosper - it's just like going back hundreds of years. - Honestly - take the worst possible conditions imaginable in the U.S. and it would be like 5th Ave in comparison to the best the native section can offer! - It sure makes you glad your home is in the states!

We've eaten dinner several times at the hotel in town - it's always European style - no water ^{or coffee} with the meals - only wine & champagne! after dinner coffee is served in the lounge! - Some stuff! -

Guess I'd better sign off for now - and get this in the mail - I could hang on to it and add more to it - but I might not get in the mood again for awhile! - So - Bye for now and be good.

Love,
Frank